

**In the Claims:**

1-14 (Canceled).

15. (Currently Amended) **[[A]] An isolated** polynucleotide comprising a nucleotide sequence that encodes a metal ion affinity peptide having a formula of  $\text{NH}_2\text{-(His-Asn)}_n$  or  $\text{(His-Asn)}_n\text{-COOH}$ , where  $n=6$  **(SEQ ID NO: 15)**.

16. (Previously Presented) The polynucleotide according to claim 15, wherein the polynucleotide comprises a nucleotide sequence encoding a fusion protein comprising a polypeptide and the metal ion affinity peptide, wherein the metal ion affinity peptide is fused to an amino- or carboxy-terminal amino acid of the polypeptide.

17. (Original) A recombinant vector comprising a polynucleotide according to claim 15.

18. (Original) A recombinant host cell comprising a recombinant vector according to claim 17.

19. (Original) The recombinant host cell according to claim 18, wherein said cell is a prokaryotic cell.

20. (Original) The recombinant host cell according to claim 18, wherein said cell is a eukaryotic cell.

21-25 (Canceled).

26. (Original) A kit for purifying a protein, comprising:  
a) a recombinant vector according to claim 17; and  
b) a metal ion affinity resin.

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